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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a theoretical construct that can be used to describe the implementation process of school programs in terms of a multi-dimensional model. Focusing on the research process of the Urban Education Studies, which is devoted to the identification and study of educational programs which are beginning to make inroads for the accomplishment of educational objectives, this paper attempts to unify certain aspects of various models and approaches in the area of implementation theory. The major components of these various models and approaches are outlined and discussed. (EE)

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OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT PROFILES: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL URBAN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

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OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT PROFILES: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL URBAN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

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The purpose of this paper is to present a theoretical construct that can be used to describe the implementation process of school programs in terms of multi-dimensional model. Questions concerning program operation and management during all phases of its existence have been left unanswered by studies either looking at adopting mechanisms, outcome analysis or goal fidelity. It was felt that to construct a useful profile, an attempt had to be made to incorporate various sub-profiles in a multi-dimensional implementation paradigm.

The Urban Education Studies, under the direction of Francis S. Chase, were initiated in March 17 with the support of a grant from the Spencer Foundation. In August 1978 the National Institute of Education contracted with the Urban Education Studies to implement an outgrowth study in six additional large urban school districts. The Studies are focusing on: (1) the delination of factors which determine the implementation of effectiveness, extent of objective achievement, and the prospects for assimilation of programs into continuing school district operations; and (2) the identification of strategies which offer the greatest promise for system-wide revitalization. The Studies continue to be sponsored jointly by the Council of the Great City Schools and the University Council for Educational Administration.

The Studies implements its research process in three phases:

Phase I - Six large urban districts (two of which have student populations over two-hundred thousand and the remaining four having fifty-thousand or more) were selected based on student population, district demographic and geographical characteristics, and demonstrable program success. Initial visits to the target-district programs were conducted by UES researchers to obtain basic program operation and management data. The nature of the information was both historical, descriptive, and current.

Phase II - This phase involves a one-week visit by a UES research team to each of the six districts. The teams, composed of 8 - 12 members which include district administrators (not indigeneous to the host district), university professors, and UES staff members, conduct in-depth studies of the target programs. Their efforts are guided by the paradigm constructed from the initial data and information obtained from Phase I. The methods employed include interviews with staff, administrators, students and parents/community members; program observation; material and document study; and examination of program evaluation results.

Phase III - All data and information are processed and analyzed by the UES research staff. Any follow-up or additional data requirements will be fulfilled during this time period. Similarities and trends will be identified for use in deriving conclusions and implications.

It was felt that a structure had to be employed in planning the thrust

of the site visit so that pertinent information could be obtained concerning the implementation of the nominated successful programs. The following discussion attempts to delineate the concept in a model format. Although it proved to be more comprehensive than originally planned, the model was useful in maintaining thought patterns during the planning stage.

The Multi-Dimensional Implementation Model

Many researchers and authors have approached the area of implementation theory from a model orientation. Some have used "Levels of Implementation" such as Hall and Loucks do in their work while others have characteristics, fidelity perspective and other modes of organization.

It appears that a certain amount of progress could be made if an effort were made to unify certain aspects of these various models or approaches to the study of implementation.

James Lipham comceptualized the major phases of implementation as:

1. Awareness Phase. Local educators become sensitive to the need for change and become informed about programmatic alternatives. Decision makers are given an overview of a program in order to stimulate them to consider the information regarding the required commitments for adoption.
2. Commitment Phase. Local decision makers compile the necessary information and secure the necessary commitments, approvals, and cooperation of people — staff, parents, community groups, and the school board. At the end of this phase, the decision to adopt or not to adopt the program improvement is made. In making the decision to adopt, local educators are provided with information describing the change, cost factors, evaluation results, and other requirements for implementing the change.

3. Changeover Phase. The school staff becomes prepared to make the changeover first. First, leaders are identified, receive instruction regarding the change, and develop plans for implementation. Specific plans are operationalized during the changeover period, and throughout, the school staff participates in ongoing staff development.
4. Refinement Phase. After school staffs have begun implementing the change program, they find that new understandings and skills are required to refine their implementation efforts. The need for refinement emerges out of the fact that the staff members are expected to perform their responsibilities in new ways. On the basis of systematic feedback, the program itself may also be refined.
5. Renewal Phase. This stage includes activities designed to identify and resolve unanticipated problems to develop improved ways of implementing the change, and to prepare successive generations of professional personnel to fill new and expanded roles.[1]

To illustrate these phases, one can examine the Urban Career Education Project in the Detroit Public Schools. This program was started in 1977 with Federal assistance. The plan of adoption included a large amount of work in Lipham's first three phases. This was accomplished thorugh needs assessment, inservice training, and the utilization of teachers in strategy planning and material development. The project concentrated on only two of the eight Regions in the system, however, it has now progressed to the latter

[1]James M. Lipham, "The Administrator's Role in Education Linkage", from Linking Processes in Educational Improvement, edited by Nicholas Nash and Jack Culbertson, University Council for Educational Administration, Columbus, Ohio, 1972, P.3 118.

two phases in its work with this limited target. This approach allows them to proceed in other Regions based on the knowledge accumulated during the first two years.

These five broad phases provide a sequential path for the longitudinal development of the implementation process. In the lattitudinal sense, Fullan and Pomfret provide a conceptual framework in terms of five Dimensions of Implementation:

Dimension One: Subject Matter or Materials. Subject matter components, as the label suggests, refer to the content of the curriculum that the teacher is expected to transmit to the student or that students are expected to acquire on their own or in cooperation with their peers, to the order in which this content is to be transmitted or acquired, and to the transmitting medium.

Dimension Two: Structure. Structural alterations involve changes in formal arrangements and physical conditions — different ways of grouping students, alternative spatial or temporal arrangements, the presence of personnel to perform new roles and an adequate supply of new materials.

Dimension Three: Behavior/Role. The behavioral manifestation of role relationship change is an essential aspect of organizational change.

Dimension Four: Knowledge. Implementation concerns the knowledge and understanding that users have about the innovation's various components, such as its philosophy, values,

assumptions, objectives, subject matter, implementation strategy, and other organizational components, particularly role relationships.

Dimension Five: Value Internalization. Concerns users' valuing of and commitment to implementing innovation's various components. Valuing must be linked to the specific aspects of the other components of implementation.[2]

It appears that these two constructs can be superimposed to provide a more comprehensive model that could be used to evaluate the total implementation process. This superposition is depicted in Figure 1. As shown, it would be possible for each of Fullan and Pomfret's Dimensions to proceed through Lipham's Phases. The area mapped-out by these coordinates (Dimensions, Phases) would refer to a Zone of Implementation as depicted in Figure 2.

This model is flexible in that the distance between concentric circles representing the phases can be adjusted to suite the type of project. This is also true with respect to the angular divisions which represent Dimensions. This flexibility is depcted in Figure 3.

Each program examined can be plotted based on acceptable subdivisions of the coordinates. These subdivisions can be measured in terms of time units or possibly program objectives and goals. In either case, the Zone of Implementation will represent a "snap shot" description of the projects progress at any certain time. Comparisons can be made of several Zones

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[2] Michael Fullan and Alan Pomfret, "Research on Curriculum and Instruction Implementation", Review of Educational Research, Winter 1977, Vol. 47, No. 1

from different projects, or of Zones from the same project, but at different times.

To supplement this representation ina more complete program profile, sub-profiles were generated (Figure 4). Here we have established two dimensional rectangular representations of variables, such as "evaluation" as they vary with the phases of implementation. This information would provide a more complete profile of the project from a management and operation perspective.

Conclusion

Although this super-position model was not implemented in a direct attempt, we were able to use the concepts as a basis for planning the strategies of the on-site visits.

The Urban Education Studies is devoted to the identification and study of those programs which are beginning to make inroads for the accomplishment of urban educational objectives. A thorough understanding of these programs must reflect a knowledge of their operation and management as it relates to the program's objectives and district goals. These operational characteristics provide the basis for administrative action and a better understanding of the reasons why certain educational changes become successfully established.

Of further importance is the study of the process and implementation determinants as they relate to learning outcomes in the urban setting. The time has now come to devote research efforts toward the events between "innovation adoption" and "measurement of outcomes". This study devotes its attention to that aspect.

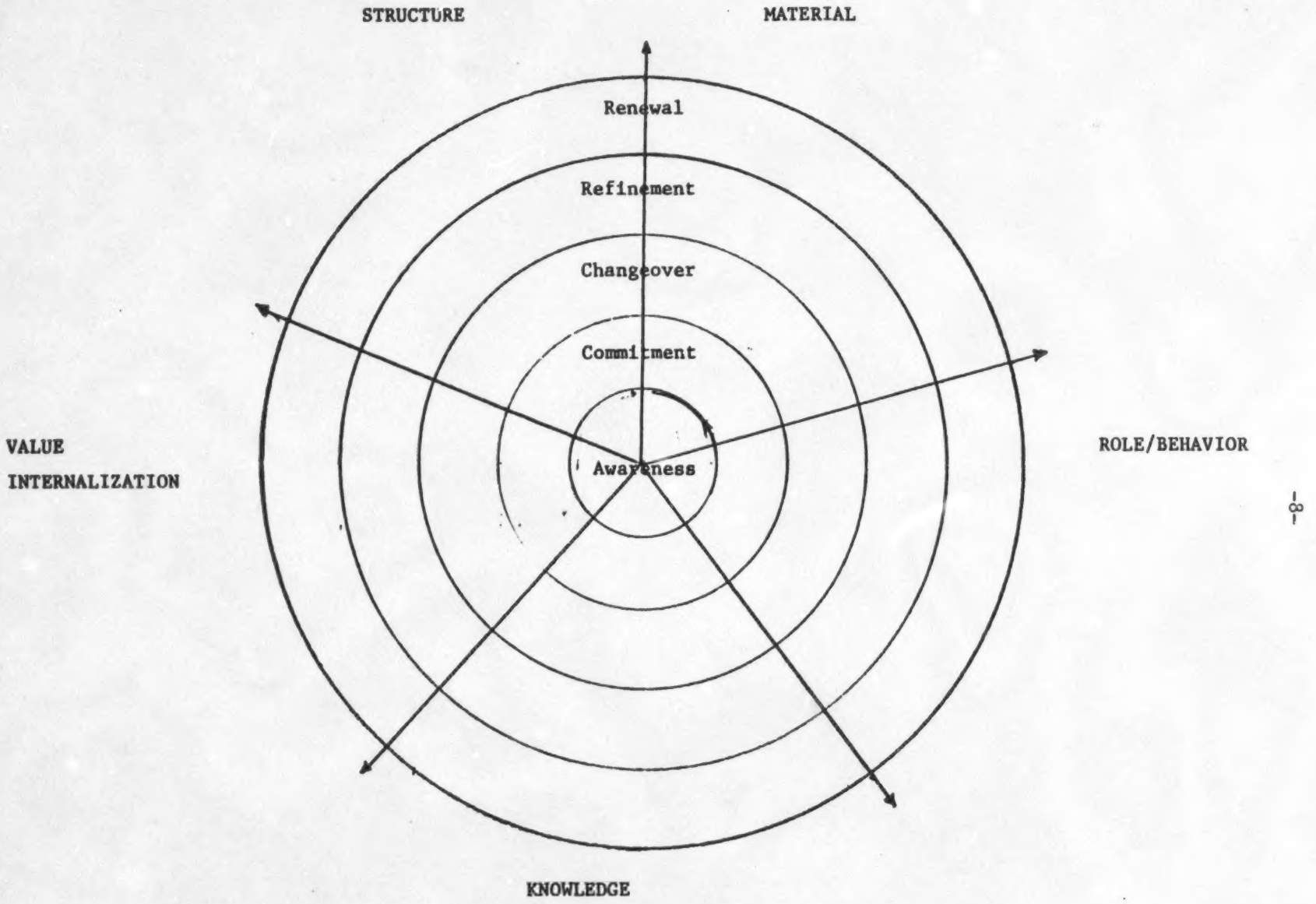

Figure 1. Superposition of Lipham's Model with that of Promfret and Fullan's Concept

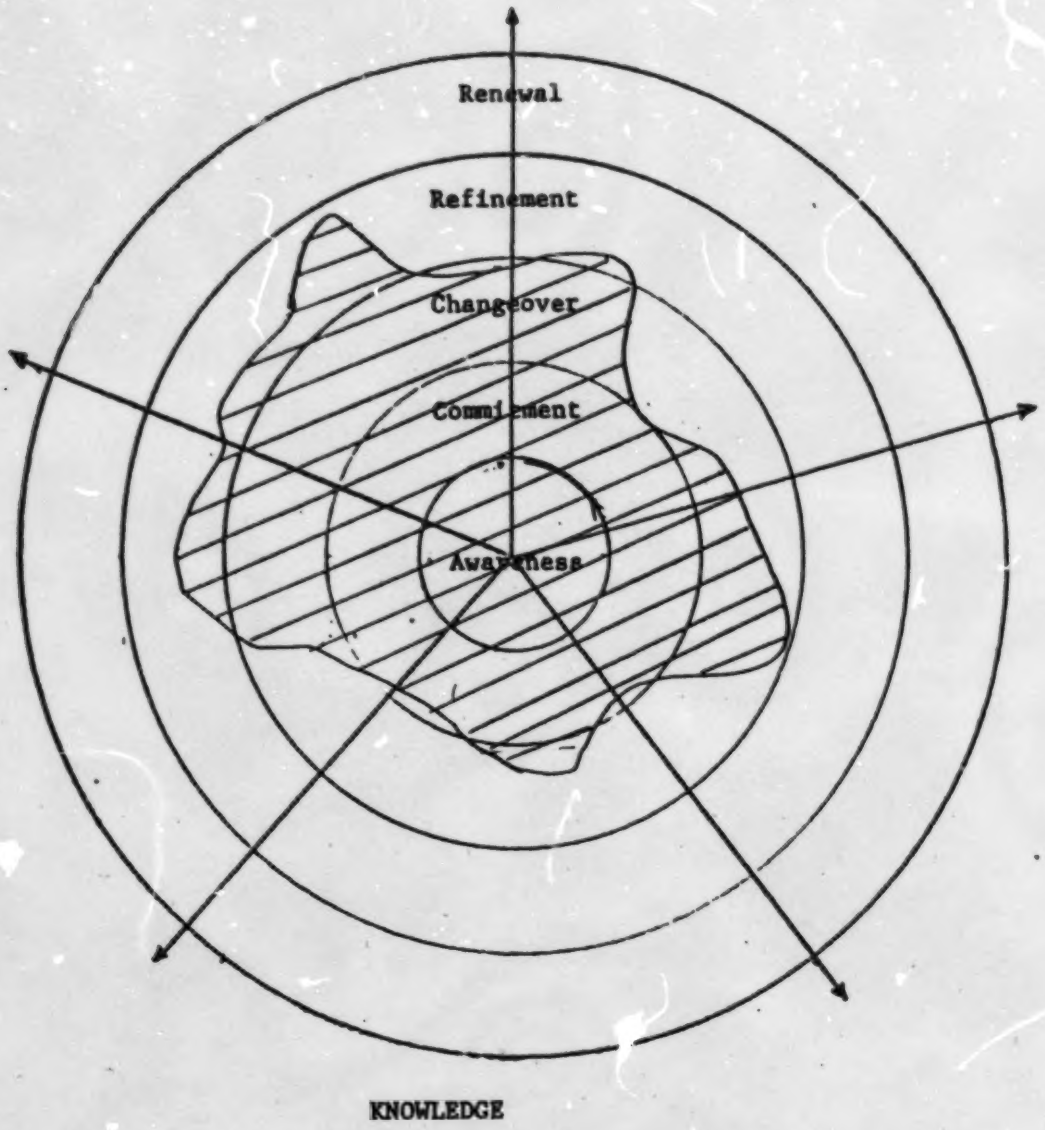

Figure 2. Zone of Implementation

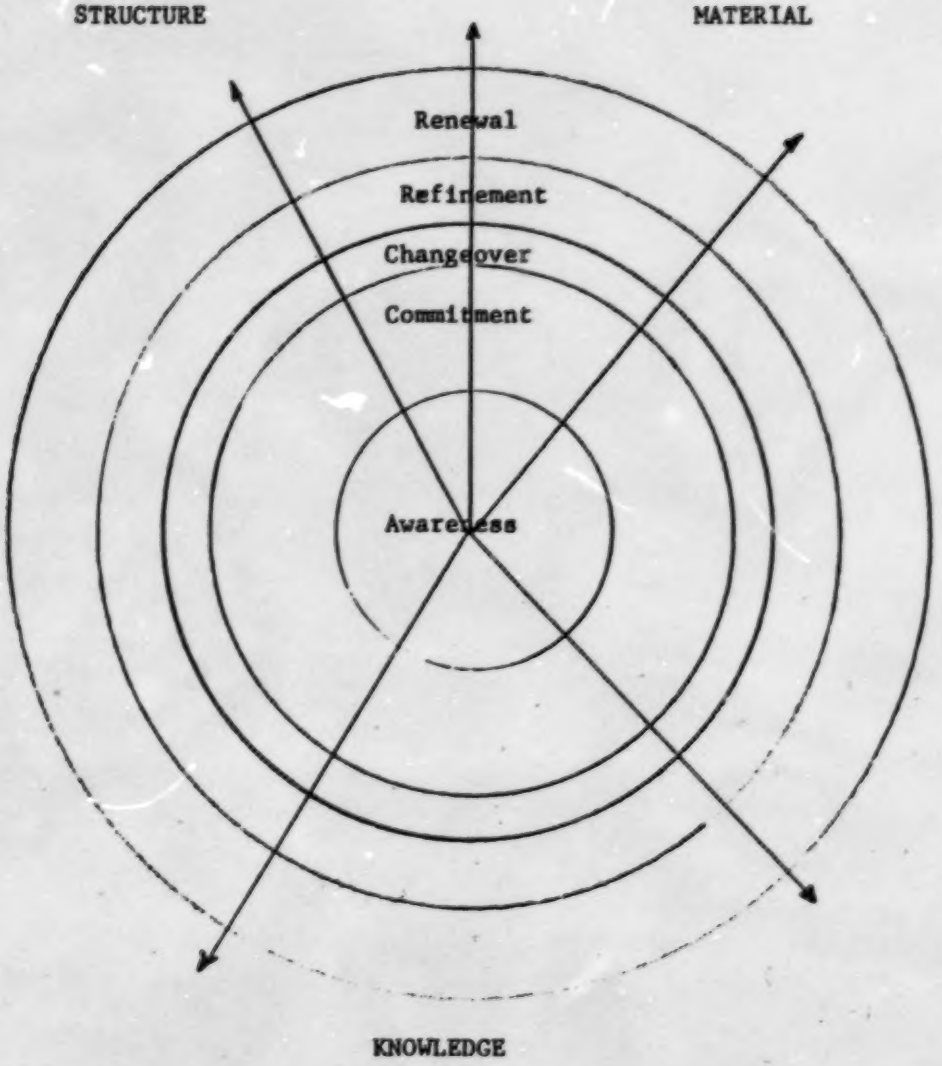

Figure 3. Model Flexibility

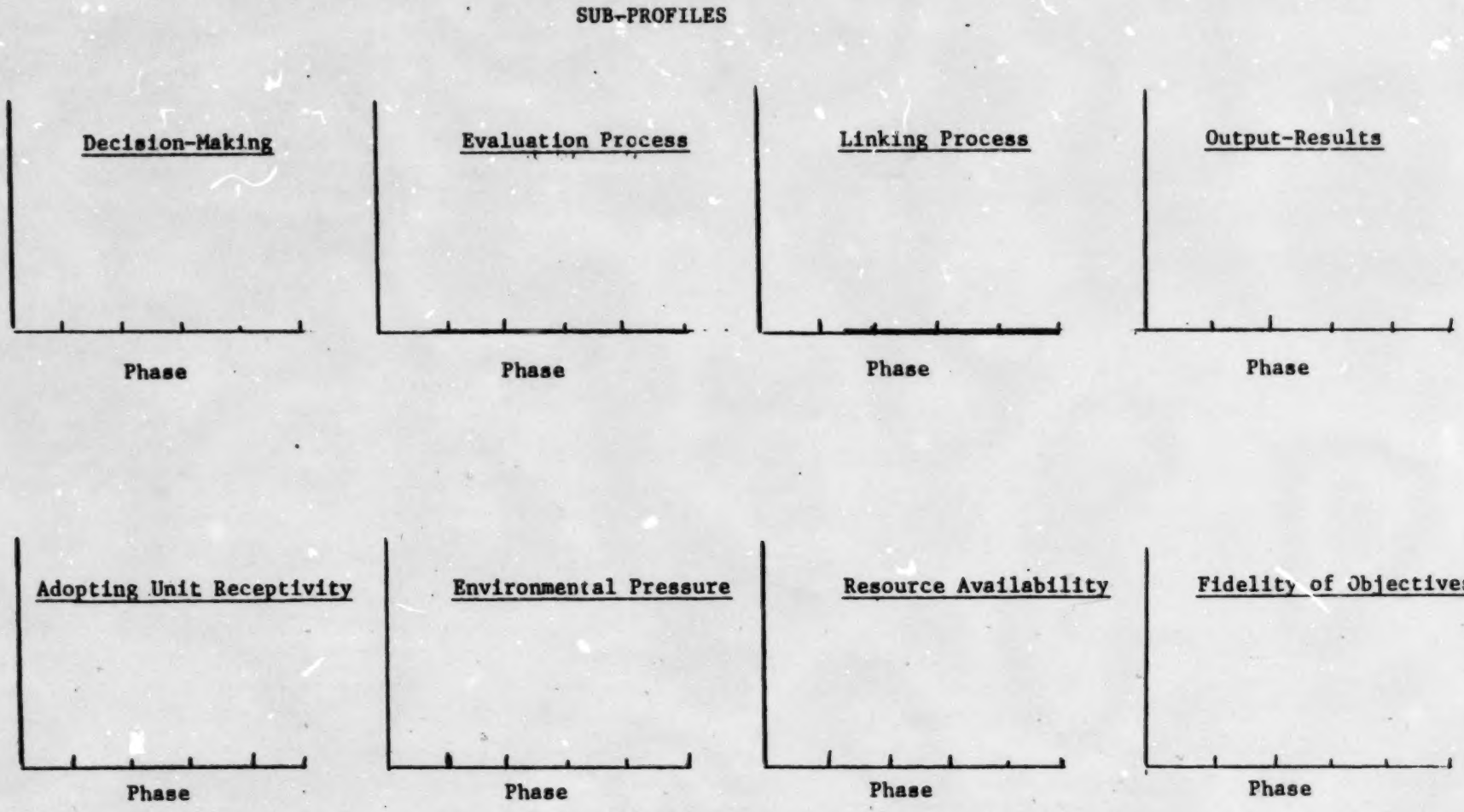

Figure 4. Sub-Profile Variables